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HERB GRAFF

MEMORIES

In and Around Petaluma, 1900-1981

By Ida A. McDaniel

I am a native of Minnesota, born in Granite Rock Township, Redwood County, on Dec. 22, 1898; the youngest of three children, a brother, Earl, 3½ years older, and a sister, Lilliebell, 5 years older. Our parents were Henry Graff and Anna Rieke Graff. Our family moved to California in May 1900, coming by train, and intending to settle in Ukiah, as my father had come west the year before and liked the warm climate there. However, when arriving in Petaluma and Mother heard that Ukiah's population was mostly Indians (she had sad memories of the past Indian wars in Minnesota) she and my father decided to stay in Petaluma to look for a home.

We took rooms at first in a rooming house that stood at the western corner of Washington and Main Streets where Bank of America now has a parking lot. A real estate agent, a Mr. Horn, was contacted and promptly sold my father a 20 acre piece of property on Corona Road north of town. There was a house and barn on the property and three apricot trees near the house, the fruit of which we enjoyed for many years. Not many neighbors at first. On the right the neighbor was the Barella family, who later owned property in town on upper Main Street where the Gem theater was located years later. On this property on Corona Road there was an adobe house and large cellar underneath where, in the early days, General Vallejo's indians stored potatoes that were raised nearby. Barellas built a large house nearer Corona Road. This property is now owned by the William Brody family. In early 1900's the Barella family butchered beef cattle and I remember the bones were piled sky high on the edge of our property, where stray dogs lived and my father had to shoot dozens of them for our own safety. Mrs. Barella gave birth to a daughter while living on Corona Road. I remember my mother having helped and cared



for her and saved her and the baby's life after a difficult birth. The Barella property was owned by the Pacific Duck Ranch years later. Schlakes owned one corner and gave the lot to build the Corona Club house.

Our neighbor on the left side was the Keough family; they owned the land as far as Ely road and crops were mostly potatoes and some corn. They had one daughter, Christina, who married Hugo Dangers years later. Across the street, on property now owned by Elmer Scott, was a Mr. & Mrs. Burke (no children). The house still stands there, the one across from Brody's. Next, where Mrs. Anna Peterson now lives, was an old Army veteran, Frank Burns. He was very friendly with my father as my father was a carpenter and he hired my father to build his buildings. He was a wealthy man; used to bury gold coins, which he promised to give my father when he died as he had no relatives. However, he died suddenly before he could tell my father where he buried the gold. Next, up the road, was the Meyling family; their house having been built before we came to California. However, my father was hired to shingle the roof on the house and I remember those shingles lasted over seventy years. The house still stands there; inside is a grand piano and other antique furniture from pioneer days. Ernest, the youngest son, still lives there. There were three sons, nonemarried. One girl, Freda, married to Mr. Haverman, a native of Germany. I think Meylings owned the land where Florence Hansen and McGugheys live now. Right across the road from our place lived a family named Hansen. There were three children: Ollricke, who married a Lutheran minister, Mr. Thiedi; Ella Marie Hansen, married to Mr. Schleth; another sister, Frieda. In later years the Neilson family lived there. Harvey, Emma, (Mrs. O. Denton, of Denton stores), Hazel Doss, and Clarence.

To remember now, back to our home, the house was too high off of the ground level, too many steps to climb, so Father lowered it. I was two years old then,



and remember our little pet dog coming up those steps and taking a little purse away from me. Another memory was the barn; it had a second story hay loft. My mother used to set hens in nests up in the loft to hatch baby chicks. There was a ladder to get up there and I remember one day my brother and sister climbed up there and broke all the eggs.

Further down the road across the railroad tracks, where Corona Feed Mill now stands, was a lumber yard. Where the Racquet Club is now, a family from San Francisco, Pressleys, built a beautiful large house, like a palace we called it, and we attended many nice parties there in early days. Later, the Millerick family owned the place. The house was near Petaluma Creek. Across the creek, a Chinese man had a large vegetable garden. Up past Ely Road, where Mr. and Mrs. Sueoka live now, a Mr. Malmgrin built his home on the corner. Next, and up Ormsby Lane, a family named Cunningham lived. They were wealthy people and they had their house built from a house that was an exhibit at the Worlds Fair in the East that year. The house was shipped around the Horn and still stands and is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Karahara. Further up Ormsby Lane lived the Groverman family, parents of Dr. Fred Groverman. There was a family named Lee across where Grovermans live now, and down near Corona Road lived a pioneer Duncan family. This house also still stands. Durans live there now.

There were several German families living north on Ely Road. One was Hammonds, one Kochs. Mr. Koch was a ship builder by trade and their house was built with wooden pegs instead of nails. It still stands today and the Christiansen family own the place now. The parents of Mr. Sueoka also lived on this property. On the south side of Corona Road, beginning at Ely Road, lived the Dennis Long family. Their land extended north to a land leading to land owned by the pioneer Mark Carr



family and up near Waugh School. The Long children were Ed, Agness, and Grace. Agness married Healey, Grace is married to Sid Smith and lives in Petaluma. The Carr heirs were the Soldates. The Dick Gray Dairy now owns the Long property and Bill Drew owns the Carr property. There were two other families near Corona Road. One was the Holmes family, another Rosenquist. Up across Old Adobe Road lived the McClure family, right across from Waugh School. The King children were the heirs and several live there now. My sister, brother and I all attended Waugh School and graduated out at 8th grade. My first teacher was Mrs. Mauzy, then Miss Haran and lastly Florence McDowell. The McDowells were early settlers and lived where the Petaluma Valley Hospital now stands. McDowell Road was named after the family. I have fond memories of Florence McDowell; she was a wonderful teacher. She drove a surrey to school. The horse was Tom, and she stopped by and let me drive old Tom to school, every day. I remember the time when Wiseman flew his air-mail trip between Petaluma and Santa Rosa. He landed down in the field near Corona Road the spot about where the new Fire Station now stands. We all ran down to see the plane.

Now, next, are memories about Petaluma. First were the times when the fishing boats would dock by Washington Street bridge. When the herring boats came, my father and neighbors and others in town and all around would hurry and rush to town and purchase a good supply of the fresh herring. As for fresh meat, other than at shops in town, there was a Doctor Turney (a veterinarian) who also sold meat that he butchered. His shop was near the corner of Magnolia and Main Streets. Most people raised their own pigs for meat or to sell. In the early 1900's the chicken business started as a means of livelihood. Leo Burke invented an incubator and gave his first sample to my father to try out. It was a tiny one, holding a dozen eggs and heated by a kerosene lamp. I remember my father putting it in our bath tub for safety in case it might explode or something. Anyway, the eggs were turned over twice a day like hens do, and in due time right on schedule twelve chicks hatched.

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Well, that was the beginning of Burkes Must-hatch Incubator Manufacturing Co. Then a Mr. L. C. Byce perfected an incubator too, and soon after my father built a large incubator house and installed the Byce incubators, as they were smaller and seemed easier to operate. We children would arise at 4 a.m. every morning and turn eggs before going to school. Same after school. I counted my share one year. I turned over one million eggs. Father sold the chicks to ranchers all over the valley and some out of state. Our hatchery prospered for years and was named Success Poultry Ranch. Then, with the chicken business, there had to be a good brand of feed available, not just grain, but a mash. So my father and an A. R. Coulsen perfected a well balanced feed and manufactured it in the building right across the street (near the alley) from the plaza on Main Street. The sale of eggs soon prospered and poultry ranches increased all over around Petaluma. My father became acquainted with a wealthy family in San Francisco, D.D.Dangers, and he hired my father to plan and build the then famous Dangers Poultry Ranch up Roblar way. This was 1905 and Hugh Dangers, the son, came to live with us to learn the poultry business. The 1906 earthquake did not destroy any buildings on that ranch. My father was made President of the firm of Martin, Dangers and Camm in San Francisco at that time. Hugh Dangers married Christina Keough, our neighbors daughter, and they lived on the ranch at Roblar. They had a son and a daughter. At home, I remember the 1906 earthquake. No damage to the chimney father built in one house. Other neighbors were not so lucky. I remember we slept out-doors afterwards - after the big shock. We stood on the road and could see the red sky at night from the San Francisco fire.

Some other memories about Petaluma were the operas at the newly built Hill Opera House. We would drive to town in our buggy and put up the horse and buggy for the evenings at a livery stable across from Hill Plaza where the Muffler shop is now. The horses were taken down a ramp to stalls under the buggy area upstairs.



Kolb & Dill and many other famous actors performed there. Once Lily Langtry sang there.

I remember the cobble-stone streets, and horse drawn buses down Washington Street. Pete Fine had a horse-shoeing shop right where the Bank of America now stands. Around the corner, in the center of the block on Washington Street, Nortrup-Meyers had a harness shop with a wooden horse out front. This was where I spent many happy times while my father attended to his business around town. Over on Main Street was Scotts Hardware Store where Beasley Restaurant is now located. On the corner was a saloon, I recall, and there were many of those in town those early days. We children were afraid of the old drunks around town. There was another livery stable on the corner of Kentucky & Washington Streets where Bank of Marin is now. George P. McNear was the big man around town those days. They built the theater in the McNear Building. The Scott Hardware building later became the Gem Theater. When I was about ten years old my parents bought a race horse for me. I used to drive to town by myself the nights when Pearl White, the actress, starred in the "Perils of Pauline", and tied my horse at the hitching rails below the plaza where Bank of America stands.

On down now to Kenilworth Park. It was a beautiful park, hedges and shade trees and a mile long race track. I remember the old Club House on the grounds. Also, the beautiful entertainment hall facing Washington Street, a little west of where the Swin Center is now. My parents went to dances there. We and other children sat on benches and watched the dancers. It was a two-story building, with the ladies room upstairs. Because I had a race horse I spent many happy hours racing on the track. I also remember the horse Kenilworth, and the horse Lou Dillon from Santa Rosa. In later years Mr. and Mrs. Laban Perry lived on the corner of Washington and McDowell where the Old Adobe Motel is today. Laban had a Rodeo field there. At that time the Senior Riding Club and Junior Riding Club were formed and



held their first drill practices which have continued over the years. I had the honor of making the red and white satin shirts and saddle blankets the year the Juniors performed at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. I also was equipment manager and Councilman for five years. My daughter and son both performed with the drill team. I was also a member of the Senior Riding Club. I wish to state here that I wish that the Riding Clubs of Marin and Sonoma County could raise funds and have a statue made of the horse Kenilworth and place it at the entrance of the Sonoma Marin fairgrounds. Maybe Rosa Estabanez would do it.

In the years up to date many new neighbors are living in our community. The hayfields from here to town are disappearing and homes occupy the land.

(Submitted by Ida A. McDaniel) d. 1988



## Ida Graff McDaniel

1-17-89  
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Ida Graff McDaniel, 90, a member of a family of early settlers in this area, died Sunday in a local convalescent hospital after a short illness.

Mrs. McDaniel was born in Minnesota and came to the Petaluma area with her family when she was two years old. She attended Waugh School and later attended a sewing trade school in Oakland where she learned her skills in sewing and clothes designing. She was the daughter of the late Henry and Anna Graff, early settlers in this area and prominent in Petaluma's chicken and poultry era. Her father, Henry Graff, who developed many items used in the hatchery business, was well known in this area.

Mrs. McDaniel was the mother of Annell Collum of Toledo, Ohio, and Curtis McDaniel of Petaluma; the grandmother of one and the great-grandmother of two. Her husband, Leo McDaniel, and a brother, Earl Graff, and a sister, Lilly Felton, preceded her in death.

Arrangements are pending at the Parent-Sorensen Mortuary, Petaluma.



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Lille bell

Daughter  
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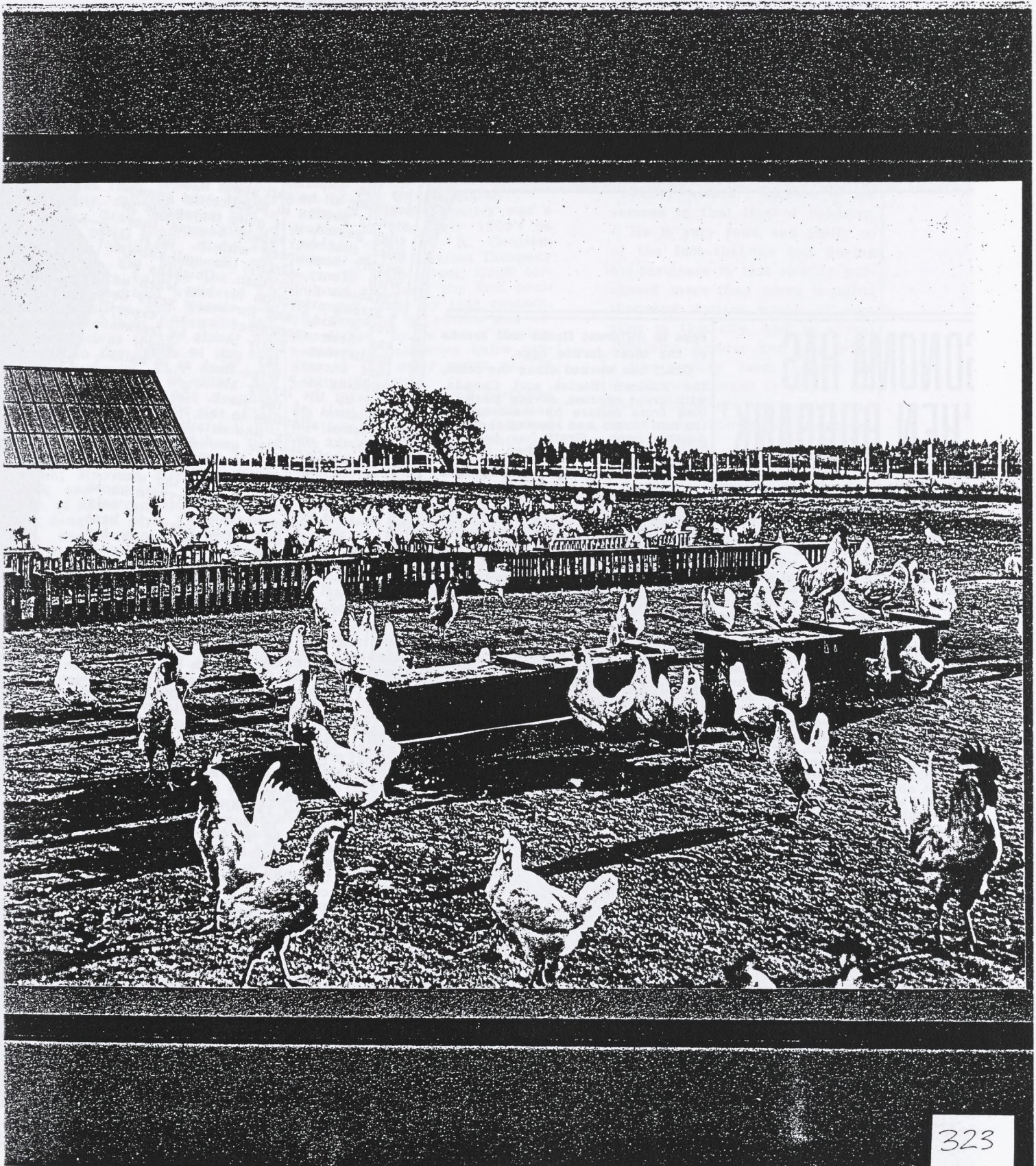
Daughter: Ruth Graft  
Anna  
Graft

464 Corona Rd





Original: Hank Gress





## SONOMA HAS 'HEN BURBANK'

PETALUMA, April 28.—Henry Graff who is known as the Poultry Wizard here, has performed valuable work for the poultrymen in the West. He is known as the man with six senses; the man with X-Ray eyes who looks right through a hen; the Poultry Burbank, who can do for poultrymen what Burbank did for horticulture and the farmer.

In an interview recently Graff was asked how long he had been in the poultry business and replied: "I have been in the poultry business and studying poultry for forty years. I have made it a business of getting to the bottom of the science of knowing the hen, as did the late Walter Hogan, my friend from Minnesota, whom I knew before coming to California. I can tell just about the number of eggs a hen will lay by her shape or form; also whether they will be fertile or hatching; the same as to the cock bird, mate up fowls along any line for breeding. I know what feed compounds will produce the most

eggs in different flocks and breeds or the most fertile eggs."

Graff has worked along the coast, the Eastern States and Canada, with great success, saving poultrymen from failure by weeding out the non layers and leaving the productive hens. Graff has been in Petaluma for more than twenty years.

## ENABLES POULTRYMEN TO REDUCE FEED BILLS.

When a boy becomes really interested in a subject and sticks to it all his life, experimenting, investigating, learning all he can about it and constantly putting in practice the knowledge gained, it is quite reasonable to infer that he should become thoroughly acquainted with it. So it is with Henry Graff, the well-known Petaluma poultryman. Chickens have been a strong attraction for him when he was a "kid," and for many years he has been recognized as an expert poultryman. Early in life he learned that success lay not so much in building up a large flock as in building up the laying ability of the individuals of the flock. So he paid especial attention to this point, learning the many fine details of difference between the good and the poor layers, until he became a real expert along this line. Indeed, his skill in this is little short of the marvelous, as hundreds of poultrymen know to their great advantage. Not only can he distinguish between the hens of large and small laying ability, but he can come very close to telling the actual number of eggs that should be expected of any hen. He also mates up the pens for best results in breeding so as to produce more good layers and thus build up a strain of the most desirable birds. In short, Henry Graff has done much for the poultry industry in Sonoma and Marin counties, enabling many poultrymen to greatly reduce their flocks and thus lower their feed bills and then to produce more hens of greater laying ability. Mr. Graff doesn't have to cull hens for a livelihood, that being assured by the income from his own poultry ranch, but he really wants others to succeed as well as himself, and so he offers his services at a nominal fee, charging only \$5 a thousand or less number of hens for culling. He also goes to outside points when poultrymen make up clubs sufficient to justify him to go, though charging only the same rate for culling.



# Courier

EVENING EDITION  
TWO SECTIONS,

Petaluma, California Friday, September 10, 1948.

## HENRY GRAFF, WAUGH DISTRICT PIONEER, FETED AT PARTY ON EIGHTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY

Congregating at the home of his son and daughter-in-law on the Corona road, Waugh district, the family, children and friends of Henry Graff, tendered him a surprise party honoring him on his 82nd birthday. Hale and hearty at his advanced age, Graff greatly enjoyed the occasion, and the best wishes of his many relatives and friends who remembered him during the day.

A delicious turkey dinner was served to the guests at the spacious home of Earl Graff, his only son. Present were: Mr. and Mrs. Graff; his oldest daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Felton (Lilliebelle) and children, and infant daughter, Dale Ann, and Kenneth Felton of Sonoma; Mr. and Mrs. Jay Koshnick and children, Donna and Joy, of San Francisco; his youngest daughter, Mrs. Alida McDaniel, and children, Annell and Curtis, of Corona road; Mr. and Mrs. Ray Horn, Herbert and Alvin Graff and daughter Vicky, and Rev. and Mrs. Thompson of Cotati.

Coming from Minnesota in 1900 with his wife and three children and settling on the present property in Waugh district on Corona road, Graff has long been associated with the poultry industry and life in this community. Also an expert carpenter and contractor, during his first years here, he planned and built several model poultry ranches, including his own, and the first H. D. Dangers ranch at Hessel, north of Petaluma, built in 1906, which was at that time the largest and most modern "poultry ranch" in the Petaluma vicinity.

Later he engaged in the hatchery business on his own ranch, and was the first to use the then newly patented Must Hatch incubator invented by the late A. E. Bourke whose son founded the Sales and Bourke Hatchery. He also used the first model gas incubators invented by the late L. C. Byce, founder of the Petaluma Incubator company. Always with an eye for thoroughness, and for having the best that could be had, Graff and his family at this time engaged in the raising of thoroughbred white

leghorn poultry, having all of the first hatching eggs shipped in from breeders in the eastern part of the United States.

Proper feed for poultry was a problem in the early 1900's so together with A. R. Coulsen, founder of the Coulsen Company on north Main street, Graff formulated and used the first poultry mash made by that concern. The brooding of chicks was accomplished by using fireless brooders which were quite popular in the early years of the poultry industry.

In later years, Graff perfected his own method of hen culling for laying purposes, and followed this business for years, until advancing age caused his retirement.

The death of his beloved first wife, the mother of his three children, in 1928, caused a great sorrow in his life, as together, they had been unusually happy, rearing a fine family, and creating a fine home and successful business.

Graff has always been an ardent hunter and fisherman, and for years owned a 160-acre ranch in the Cazadero mountains where he also maintained a hunting club for some time. In 1943 he was united in marriage to Louise Anderson of Minnesota, a friend known in his youth, and the union is a happy one. Together they are spending the sunset of their lives in their home on Corona road, loved and respected by relatives and friends alike.

## TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

H. Graf who is a real booster for Petaluma, on Tuesday celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his arrival in Petaluma by giving a dinner party at which his three children and four grandchildren were guests.

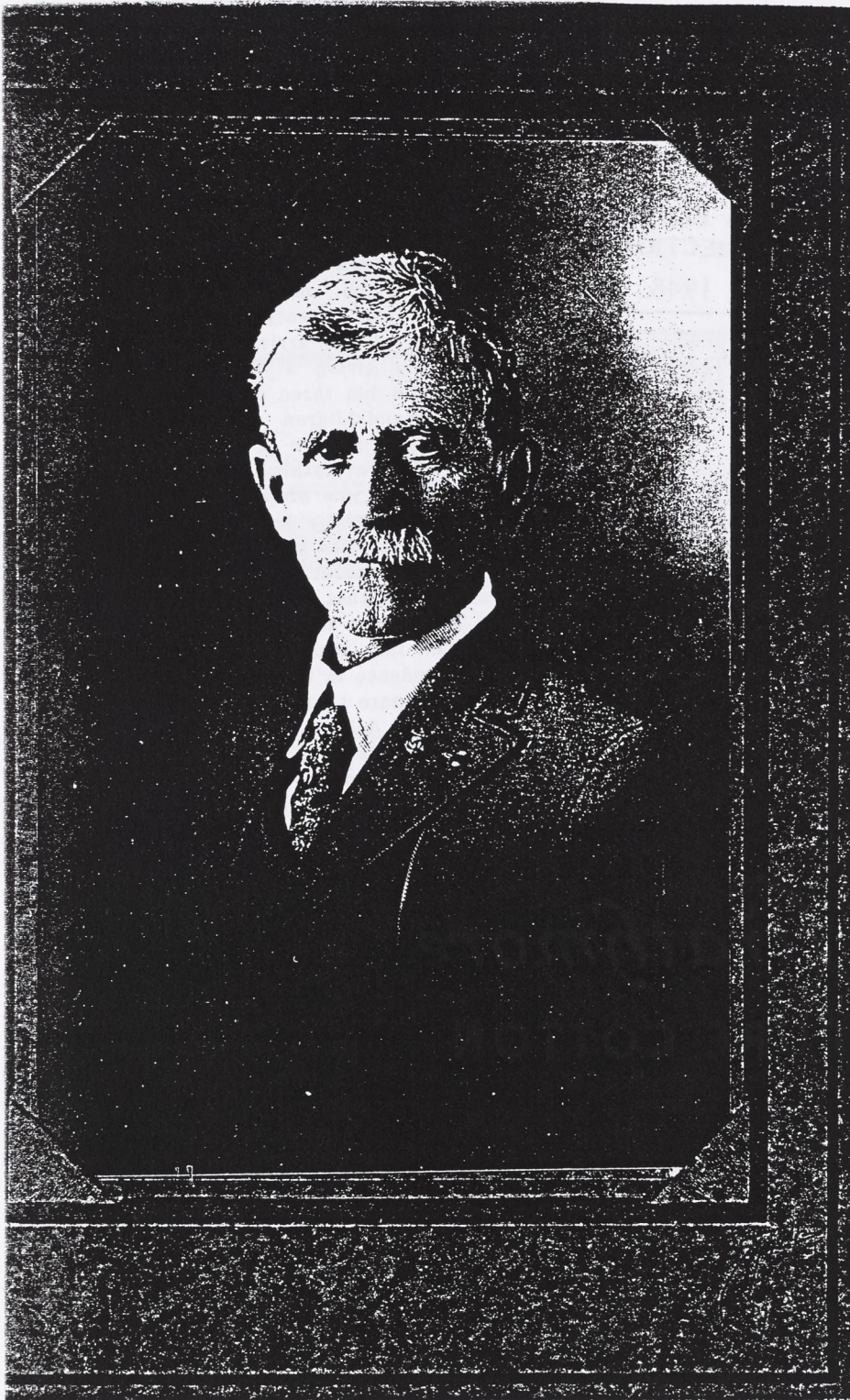
A novel feature of the dinner was that everything served at the dinner was produced on the farm, except the ice cream.

Mr. Graf, has been termed the "poultry wizard," because of his success in that line of industry.

He is very fond and justly so of the fact that he has during his residence in this vicinity purchased more than seven hundred thousand dollars worth of supplies in this city, and is a real Petaluma booster and live wire.

His poultry farm located in the Crown district is one of the show places of the county, and is annually shown to prominent visitors here.





# -Courier

EVEN

Petaluma, California Friday, September

## HENRY GRAFF, WAUGH PIONEER, FETED AT PAR EIGHTY-SECOND BIRTH

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